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**Headline: From The Classroom To The Workplace**

## **From The Classroom To The Workplace**

One of Mr Jack Lim's key motivations for joining the education sector was to make a meaningful and significant impact on society. His role as Executive Director of SMU Academy — the professional training arm of Singapore Management University (SMU) — matters even more now in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted numerous industries and businesses, as well as the workers they hire.

SMU Academy is one of many Continuing Education and Training Centres providing professional courses to jobseekers under the SGUnited Skills Programme. By helping them develop new skills and acquire new knowledge, it aims to give their professional lives a real shot in the arm with more promising career opportunities.

"I've seen a number of people retrenched and desperately trying to switch careers, putting them out of work for a few months. I feel incredibly privileged and thankful to be placed in this role to support and empower those who need help," said Mr Lim.



## **TO EQUIP AND EMPOWER**

Leveraging the university's resources and industry linkages, SMU Academy offers a wide range of certificate and diploma programmes to equip working professionals with the knowledge, skills and career resilience required to stay employable in a fast-changing world. That extends to its SGUnited Skills courses, which cover subject areas as diverse as business and digital transformation, healthcare management and digital health, as well as logistics and supply chain management and transformation.

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“Our SGUnited Skills programmes empower and equip participants, especially mid-career jobseekers and the self-employed, to be competent to face the challenges and demands of the current dynamic business environment,” explained Mr Lim. He added that the emphasis of the courses is on promoting digital skills, providing experiential learning opportunities and creating networking opportunities with industry.

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– MR JACK LIM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SMU ACADEMY

The latter emphasis on networking with industry partners, in particular, forms part of the employment facilitation efforts characteristic of all SGUnited Skills Programmes. To boost trainees’ prospects for gainful employment, SMU Academy organises various direct job placement initiatives, networking events with employers, and even interactions with potential funders of new enterprises.

Take SMU Academy’s ongoing SGUnited Skills Business and Digital Transformation Programme (BDTP), for example. Out of the 300 participants who have signed up for the BDTP, more than 30 have found full-time employment or are involved in setting up new businesses even before completing the course. This is in no small measure due to the new skills and networks that they have developed through the programme, as in the case of 51-year-old Mr Ken Lim.



### **GIVING WORKERS A LEG UP ON THE JOBS FRONT**

Mr Ken Lim, formerly a sales leader at a Swiss business based in Singapore, was made redundant last year after the company reduced its headcount as a result of the pandemic.

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After exploring different upskilling options, he decided to pursue the nine-month SGUnited Skills Business and Digital Transformation Programme.

The course covers topics essential to the success of any modern company, such as business innovation and sustainability, enterprise risk management, digital marketing and data analytics. Participants also have the opportunity to develop business networks and gain hands-on experience through project work with partner companies.

**“AS A TRAINEE, I’VE LEARNED NEW SKILLS AND BUSINESS FUNDAMENTALS FROM LECTURERS WHO POSSESS A WEALTH OF BUSINESS EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE.”**

**– MR KEN LIM, SGUNITED SKILLS PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT**

It was during Mr Ken Lim’s project assignment with Foresight Metal Engineering (FME), a leading cable support system specialist in Singapore, that his performance was impressive enough to nab a full-time job offer. “FME’s higher-ups found my career experience relevant to their business, and they offered me a contract position as Sales Director,” he said of his new role, which began in January. “My responsibilities are in sales management and business development, and primarily involve working with product principals to serve customers in Singapore.”



He credits SMU Academy for facilitating his return to the workforce. “As a trainee, I’ve learned new skills and business fundamentals from lecturers who possess a wealth of business experience and knowledge,” said Mr Ken Lim. Learning alongside other trainees has also made the classes engaging and enjoyable, and he found the team presentations and Q&A sessions very informative.

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Mr Jack Lim is optimistic that such a fruitful experience will be the rule rather than the exception for SGUnited Skills participants. “Through our holistic approach towards education and skills training, we are certain that our participants will continue to be well-equipped and empowered to meet the demands and challenges of our dynamic economy,” he said.